


LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

LOOKOUT AVE.

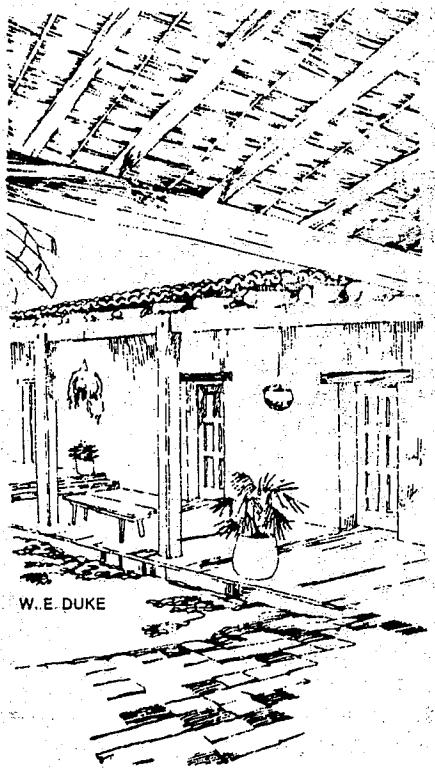



VOL. No. 3, ISSUE No. 5

OCTOBER, 1979


CALENDAR

- October 5-6 Oktoberfest
- October 9, 7:15 Board Meeting
- October 14, 3:00 General Meeting
- November 1, 2:00 Docent Meeting
- November 11, 1:00-4:00 Joint Meeting with Pioneers of La Mesa
- November 13, 7:15 Board Meeting
- December 8 Open House



CASA de ESTUDILLO

Refreshments for
October 14th

Fall Pie Festival 

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Everyone please bring

FUND-RAISING--GIGANTIC YARD SALE

The Fund-raising Committee would like all of our members to help us conduct a "GIGANTIC YARD SALE" at the McKinney House on Saturday, October 27, from 10:00 to 3:00. In order to make this a success we are asking you to collect from your cupboards and garages, as well as from your neighbors, all of your "Treasured Trash" and donate it to us for this sale. If you are unable to bring it to the McKinney House, we will gladly pick it up beginning Friday, October 19, one week before the sale so that we can get it priced. Just call Thelma Todd, at 466-5970 or Jean Guy, at 466-7385 and we will arrange for a convenient time for pick up. We will also be selling Hot Dogs, Coffee and Coke, and last but not least WE NEED VOLUNTEERS - Please call Jean Guy at 466-7385. Let's make this a

BIG ONE!!!!

REMEMBER RAMONA'S MARRIAGE PLACE?

"Hello, Fellow members!"

That's what you'll say when we all get together again (It's been a long time) at La Mesa Senior Citizens Recreation Center, 8450 La Mesa Boulevard, La Mesa, October 14, at 3:00 for dessert, coffee and a VERY brief business meeting. Best of all, the PROGRAM will be of interest to EVERYONE.

Pat Kettler says Alexa Luberski, curator at the Casa de Estudillo (for many years known as Ramona's Place) and the Seeley Stable Museum of the Old West in Old Town, will talk about the Casa and its restoration. Her duties include the maintaining of the furnishings, so she can give us insight into some of the restoration and the "condition" in which some of the furnishings were found. She will also tell of some of the other sights and sites in Old Town and give news about what is happening at Casa Bandini. The presentation will include slides and a question and answer period.

See you -- over HOME MADE PIE October 14

Fellow Members:

This is my first communication with you as President, although we have "met" many times before (on paper) during the four years I served as Chairman of Fund Raising. Please indulge me by reading all of it, as there is something in my message for every member - I hope!

First a thank you to all those who have helped with our many fund raising projects. Please give your continued support to our new chairman. We have raised money in the past to make payments on our first and second trust deeds, restoration of the dining room and living room, new garage roof, plumbing, wiring and painting the exterior of the house. But, as the song says, "we've only just begun."

We have established the Ice Cream Social as a traditional "Event". Our Christmas Open House, as a gift to the community, is setting a nice precedent. Plans for next summer include reviving the Festival (Fiesta) de las Flores, started in 1929, and last held in 1955. If you were a part of that event in any way at any time, please get in touch with me.*

The McKinney House belongs to every member and we hope you will accept your responsibility as a member of this "family" by assuming a position on some committee or activity, no matter how small it may be. We now have about 400 members, which is a success story in itself. However, we also have 29 committees ranging from 2 to 20 members. We need your help to succeed. To quote Browning, " -let me count the ways."

Enclosed in this mailing is a sheet showing all the committees and needs. Please tear it out and return by mail, checking what you are willing to do and giving your name, etc. If you are one of those who can't get out much, the Telephone Committee needs many more helpers.

There are a few goals I would like to achieve during my term in office.

- 1- To build a Gazebo in the back yard as the focal point of an old-fashioned garden. (There was once a grape arbor there.)
- 2- To move the garage to the rear of the property for use as a workshop and storage. (We have furniture, etc. to refinish.)
- 3- To establish a file of all the Talents within our group. I know we have artists, musicians, actors, etc. out there. Please let us know. We need you for our February Affair.
- 4- To set one Saturday morning a month aside for kids to tour the house (with Docents). Adults must be accompanied by a child.
- 5- To acquire a file of great old-time recipes from your family favorites, with a L.M.H.S. Cookbook in the future.

If you have suggestions or ideas please do not hesitate to call me, or drop a note. Below are two numbers for your use. I look forward with eagerness in serving with you this year.

Sincerely,



Helen Wood Linke, President
La Mesa Historical Society, Inc.

Res. 469-9988
Bus. 462-9940

MEMORABILIA IN ACTION

In August, 1921, Ruth Huntington married Joyce McKinney in the McKinney family home. Rev. Henry McKinney, Joyce's father, officiated.

September 7, 1979, their daughter, Ann McKinney Jacobs, married Bill Robinson, literally standing on the same spot. Rev. Michael Reese-Cowan, pastor of the Normal Heights Methodist Church officiated.

When Ruth McKinney announced that Ann would like to be married in the old McKinney home, many members of the La Mesa Historical Society sprang into action. There was much planning and there were many consultations. The house was cleaned; the people working on the restoration of the dining room speeded up their efforts; the silver was polished; and the cake was ordered.

The day arrived. Flowers were donated by members, and a linen table cloth, a silver service, and a punch bowl were brought. The table was set up and a very talented member arranged a beautiful centerpiece of rosebuds in a silver bowl, and made arrangements for the living room and hall.

The wedding party arrived, and the little bride-to-be went upstairs to put on her wedding dress.

Donald McKinney took this opportunity to brief the groom-to-be. "Yes," he said, "I remember, Ruth came down the stairs and Joyce met her at the foot of the stairs and took her hand and led her to that very corner. My father stood in front of them with his back to us."

DOCENT MEETING

Thursday November 1 2:00 P.M.

For all docents and anyone interested in the docent program at the McKinney House, there is to be a meeting at the House November 1 at 2:00.

Time spent by all of you--even before there is a real tour program in action--is much appreciated. All who go to the House on our "Thursdays" are making it possible for us to keep the McKinney House going.

The last meeting with the McKinneys was very interesting as we heard about "Life as it was lived in the McKinney House."



FIGURE NO. 5L.

Following the script, Ann, dressed in a lovely new "old-fashioned" dress started down the stairs. As there was no music, the group sang, "Here comes the Bride," more or less on key. Bill met her, took her hand and led her to "the spot in the corner."

Rev. Reese-Cowan conducted the very meaningful ceremony. Running true to form, the groom had trouble putting the ring on Ann's shaking finger.

Following Ann's wishes, the guest list was small: her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Joyce McKinney, Mrs. Cromwell McKinney, Donald McKinney and Bill's mother, Mrs. Helen Robinson.

Three members of the La Mesa Historical Society were there to serve coffee, tea and punch after the bride cut the cake.

We were very happy that the dining room was finished and that everything looked so well. The McKinneys were delighted and appreciative.

Ann went around remembering--pointing out things to Bill-- "I can remember my making cookies in this kitchen at that table," ...

She will have another beautiful memory. It was truly Memorabilia in Action.

By Thelma Todd

PORTER HALL--A PART OF HOME

There it is...on the northwest corner of La Mesa Boulevard and University Avenue in La Mesa. A small octagonal building with a red tile Chinese Hat roof. Now, a Johnny-come-lately, rectangular red-roofed wing reaches to the north. Little Chinese Hat building hasn't always been here. It began early in the century across the street in a large nursery featuring lemon trees. From those beginnings, one couldn't really guess what the importance of its future and present could mean to our town, La Mesa. Porter Hall.

Porter Hall. Conveyed to La Mesa in 1929, lots 16-22 inclusive in "...Block 1 (one) of Outlook Terrace..."with the right and privilege of said City ...to erect a public library building thereon..." by Sherman and Anna Goble, who were carrying out the wishes of Edwards W. Porter, former La Mesa Mayor. The area became Porter Park, and at the time, the San Diego County Library occupied the structure.

Mrs. James Porter of La Mesa says the building looked the same then as the original part of the structure does today. One County record reports that Porter Hall, in its nursery setting, was a flower shop. One hopes so. Somehow that fits the building very well.

Early-on, Porter Hall was the La Mesa branch of the San Diego County Library and also housed the La Mesa Public Library, a collection of books donated by interested citizens. Space was very limited, and every imaginable community agency --AAUW, service clubs, churches, women's clubs-- promoted the addition of what is now the North Wing.

They worked to earn money to help the City with financing the project. Carrie Jacobs Bond (the End of a Perfect Day lady) gave a whopping benefit tea, for example, for the cause.

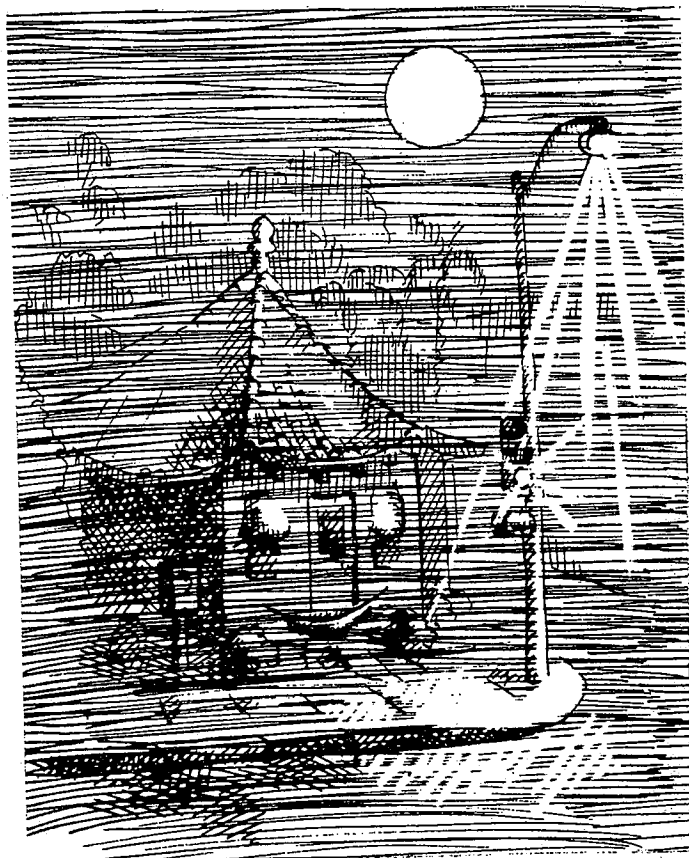
So the new wing was born. However, crowded conditions weren't improved that much, and one wonders how Porter Hall, already bursting at its several seams, could possibly have found space for one to get a California State Driver's License in 1954. But so it was.

Porter Hall breathed a sigh of relief when, in 1958, the County Library moved to its present site in the Civic Center, and the La Mesa Library, as such, was no more. But the long rest Porter Hall anticipated was instead a short one. The building which by now had a snack-bar arrangement with kitchen facilities

Then, in 1974, when the present Senior Citizens Recreation Center was constructed, Porter Hall had to pack up its Chinese Hat, its smooth floors, its casement-like windows, and its pretty doors and move across the street, where today it serves the community, almost around the clock.

Today, Porter Hall hears writers read their works as the La Mesa Showcase Writers' Club and a Writers' Workshop under Helix Adult School meet there. The La Mesa Camera Club clicks away there, and the Southwest Fossilers call it home. La Mesa Movie Makers, The Numismatic Society, and the Sign Language Folks gather there. A Stamp Club, a Men's Alcoholic Anonymous group, the La Mesa Toastmistress Club, and the La Mesa Chess Club keep the building alive.

At the end of a busy day and evening, lights out and the streets now almost still.. the stop signal casting eerie light and shadow through the windows, the North Star and Black Mountain out there on duty... Porter Hall can relax a bit...remembering borrowers of books, buyers of flowers-- dear thoughtful people who gave life to it ...the smell of coffee brewing, laughter, good talk. Another sigh.



Better sleep fast, dear Porter Hall, under your Chinese Hat. Tomorrow is another day.

By Robert Aborn

La Mesa Historical Society Committees are listed below. Some require only two members, some need twenty. Please check those you are willing to help serve. If you have questions regarding any, please call Woody at 469-9988. You may return it by mail or bring to the next general meeting. Thank you.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Archives | Newsletter |
| Bequests & Mem.Gifts | Oral History (Taping) |
| Community Relations | Programs |
| Depot & Railroad | Publicity |
| Directory for 1980 | Publication (Magazine) |
| Docents (House Tours) | Quilters & Handcrafts |
| Fund Raising | Restoration - House |
| Garden Group | Furniture |
| Historian & Scrap Book | Landscaping |
| Historical Sites | Talent |
| Hospitality | Telephone |
| House "keepers" | Tours (Bus & Amtrak) |
| Insurance | Others? _____ |
| Mailing | |
| Membership | |
| Memorabilia | |
| Museum | |

We also need talents such as musicians, actors and actresses, script writers, extroverts, etc. who would enjoy taking part in plays, etc. at our general meetings. Will you please indicate below what you would like to participate in and your special talent. Thank you.

Music / Arts / Writing / Acting / Whatever ? / _____

I play (Instrument) or sing. _____

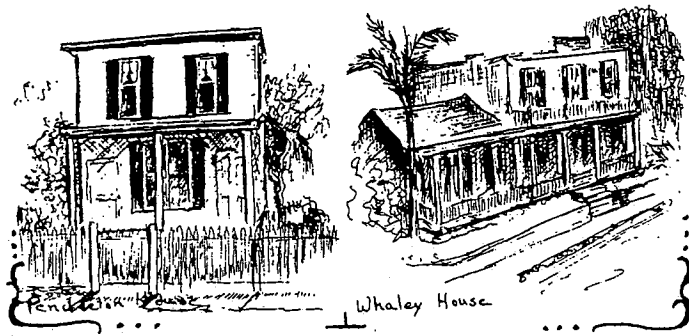
I will _____

Signed _____ Address _____

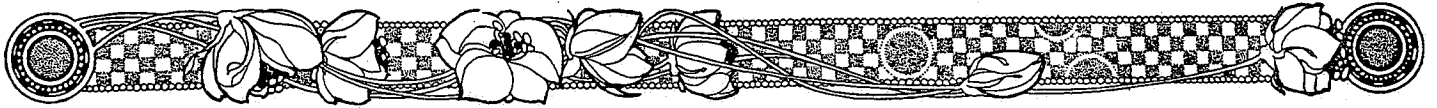
Tel No.(s) _____

Mail to Box 882 La Mesa, CA 92041

DO IT NOW!



WHALEY HOUSE - 1857



THE WHALEY HOUSE

The Whaley House, located at 2482 San Diego Avenue, is a beautiful example of an early California residence. It is a large, two-story structure composed of wood and brick, with a full length wooden porch in front. When you first see the Whaley House, standing boldly in Old Town, it almost beckons to you to come inside.

The original construction of this two-story mansion began on May 6, 1857. Thomas Whaley also built a brick yard near the rear of his house--the first brick yard in San Diego.

Much social life centered around the house. A granary annexed to the house was later remodeled and became the County Court House on August 12, 1869. The house also served as a theater for a traveling company, "The Tanner Troupe," who also used two of the upstairs bedrooms for theatricals.

On March 31, 1871, an event which the Whaleys would not soon forget took place. The County court records, then maintained at the Whaley House, were removed and taken to "new town" -- what is now downtown San Diego. This disturbance occurred during the night. Col. Chalmers Scott, then county clerk and recorder, and his colleagues had transferred the papers to "new town," despite efforts of the Whaleys to keep the court house.

Although there was much activity around the house when it was occupied by Thomas Whaley, his wife, Anna and their six children, the house is

quieter now with the exception of the times when there are tourists and guests who visit the House and other historical buildings in Old Town daily.

Some believe the house to be haunted by Thomas Whaley, his spirit still searching for the missing court records, but in our reality, the house displays an impressive collection of antiques, all relevant to the time of the Whaleys. Downstairs rooms include the Court House, a delightfully furnished parlor, a library, a music room and the kitchen. The upstairs houses four bedrooms, one being a nursery and two of which were leased to "The Tanner Troupe" for theatricals.

DIRECTOR HONORED

At the September meeting of the Board of Directors of the La Mesa Historical Society, Thelma Todd was unanimously elected a Director Emeritus in recognition of her services to the Society.

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE!!!

All members who wish to have their names listed in the new membership directory should be sure that their dues are current. If you have friends who have been considering joining the Society, please encourage them to join now!

The Directory will be published this month, so please double check your dues receipt or call me to be sure. Our fiscal year begins July 1. Thank you.

Vicki Willis 460-0748

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La Mesa Historical Society, Inc.

Res. 469-9988
Bus. 462-9940